

Mimulus Memo



"Your garden is such a peaceful place"

by Monica Tudor

JUNE 2015

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EVENTS

MAY

30 — Field Trip: Old State Road

JUNE

18 — Meeting

14 — Field Trip: Tejon Ranch

26, 27 & 28 — Camp-Out:
Horse Meadow

JULY-AUGUST

No meetings

"YOUR GARDEN IS SUCH A PEACEFUL PLACE," HEIDI COMMENTED when she and her grandson visited my California garden on Easter Monday. Her words were music to my ears since I totally agree with her. If given the slightest hint, I'll talk about my garden like grandparents talk about their grandchildren. The poor victim/listener will hear all about the latest blooms and new growth until their eyes glaze over. When Heidi originally asked to see the garden, I'm not sure she knew what she was in for.

She and her grandson showed up in the early afternoon. The conditions were perfect for a visit — sunshine, but not too hot. We went to the back portion of the backyard where the garden is located. The garden is about 50 feet by 85 feet at present. (My husband and I are in light-hearted negotiations for its expansion at some future date.) Two-thirds of the garden is fully established and the remaining

This time I think I've got it figured out. They are both planted within a foot or two of a "nurse" plant.

ample, we looked at Allen Chickering sage and compared it to Bee's Bliss sage. The former is tall and the latter hugs the ground. The blue of the Allen Chickering blooms are intensely blue while the Bee's Bliss is more of a pastel blue. The various sages have different blooming periods so there will be at least one variety of sage blooming early March through June. We picked leaves and smelled their scent. I told them that I could always



Elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*)

Photos courtesy Monica Tudor

third is facing its first summer. Almost everything was blooming. I'd love to list everything, but it would take too much space. A list of what wasn't blooming would be much shorter: the zaushnerias, manzanitas, milkweeds and *Aster chilensis* are not blooming, but will, when their season comes. As we walked around the path through the garden, I pointed out plants and gave their characteristics. For ex-

"A peaceful place"...(Continued)

tell when my dogs run through the garden because they come back to the house smelling like sage. And believe it or not, I can tell if they've brushed against a white sage or the Allen Chickering by the scent. We



Scarlet monkeyflower
(*Mimulus cardinalis*)

looked at the still-blooming California poppies, along with elegant clarkia and bladderpod. Have I told you how much I like bladderpod? It blooms almost all year on very little water. In fact, bladderpod grows all over the Panorama Vista Preserve in north Bakersfield and practically anywhere else in Kern County. I showed Heidi and her grandson the milkweed plants. The milkweed seeds have started to sprout and are about an inch

tall. I put out seeds as well as pots and the plants that came from pots are doing well. Hopefully the monarch butterflies will stop by and enjoy the garden, too. Heidi and her grandson stopped several times to look at hummingbirds and lizards, butterflies, ants and bees. I showed them my two surviving manzanitas, still alive and growing new leaves! I love manzanitas but have a knack for killing them. This time I think I've got it figured out. They are both planted within a foot or two of a "nurse" plant. The nurse plant pro-

vides shade and has established mycorrhizae, which helps the manzanita survive. At least that is what I think is happening.

After showing Heidi and her grandson the garden, we took the long way to the house and looked at the fruit trees: fig, nectarine, apple, pomegranate and plum, and the grape vines. I love getting little kids interested in growing things. Who knows? One day he might share his garden with his own grandkids. 🌸

Thank you to:

Lucy Clark, Clyde Golden, Patty and Dale Gradek and Rich Spjut, for taking on the sometimes frustrating task of organizing the many memorable field trips this spring.

Rich Spjut for the informative April 16th slide show.

Patty Gradek for greeting new visitors, and **Don and Yvonne Turkal** for doing sign-ins.

Clyde Golden, for presenting the enjoyable May slide-show on Mill Creek blooms.

Dorie Giragosian, Ellen Cypher and Denis Kearns, for organizing, collecting and labeling all the specimens for the annual wildflower show held at the Bakersfield College Garden Fest.

Rob and Diana Nelson for generously sharing the knowledge gained from replacing their original residential landscape with an all-native-plant garden.

All of the people who offered to take on a task to keep Kern CNPS moving forward.



California lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.)

Charlotte Eden Nash Smith (1899-1982) Notable Rancher, Teacher, and Botanist

by Nancy Nies

HAVING GROWN UP IN THE HILLY, RURAL area around Woody, to the northeast of Bakersfield, **Charlotte Eden Nash Smith** would later remember how excitedly the country children would spot the first wildflowers each spring, discovering new blossoms each day, until eventually there would be *"a luxury of flowering, a profusion and variety never found elsewhere."* Throughout Charlotte's life, her home would remain *"those beautiful, beautiful hills,"* as she called them. And Charlotte's early interest in local native plants would eventually lead her to make a detailed and comprehensive study of the area's native flora. **Ernest Twisselmann**, in *Leaflets of Western Botany*, Oct. 1962, would credit Charlotte with possessing *"an intimate knowledge of the botany of the Greenhorn Range."*

Charlotte was born in 1899 in Minnesota, to **Edward** and **Thea Nash**, both children of Norwegian immigrant parents. Charlotte's parents separated in 1901, and her mother left, taking Charlotte and her older sister **Hester** to Tennessee. There, Thea began work on a teacher's certificate, but fell ill. Told that she and Charlotte both had tuberculosis, and that their only chance of recovery lay in moving to California, she headed west with her daughters. After a brief stay in Los Angeles, they went to San Francisco, where Thea obtained her teacher's certificate, and on to San Luis Obispo, where she taught school.

Hearing that teachers in Kern County were better paid, Thea hired a man with a wagon and team to take the family and their possessions to Bakersfield. There, she went to see **Robert L. Stockton**, then Superintendent of Schools for Kern County, to ask for a teaching job. Stockton convinced her to take the one-room Joiner School, about thirty miles northeast of Bakersfield in the hills above Woody. And thus began, in 1904, a new life for Thea and her daughters.

During Thea's first year at Joiner, a neighboring rancher wanted to sell a few head of young cattle. Thea bought them, pastured and fattened them, and, after some months, sold them at a good price. It was then that she saw the opportunity that the cattle business held for her and her family. That year, she was able to purchase the homestead of 160 acres where they had been living. Thea would eventually teach at a number of schools and acquire more land and cattle over the years. Despite starting with very little, and in the course of their lives enduring difficult living

conditions, the trials of flood and fire, and much serious illness, the three Nash women would work hard and accomplish much.

Charlotte attended the schools where her mother taught, and in the spring of 1917 entered high school in Bakersfield. After graduation, on the urging of her mother and sister — and at a time when few women went to college — Charlotte went to Berkeley to study at the University of California. Following in her mother's and sister's footsteps, Charlotte taught for a number of years in Kern and Tulare Counties. In 1935 she married **Hugh Smith**, from a neighbor ranching family, who ran his own ranch. In 1955 Charlotte and Hester purchased from their mother what Charlotte called *"the ranch that had been our life and our love,"* — by then 4,300 acres in size. They operated it until 1971, when they in turn sold it. Charlotte would later write of those who had meant so much to her: her mother, whom she called her *"morning star"* . . . her sister Hester, as *"unswervingly good as she was beautiful"* . . . and her husband Hugh, *"one of the finest, whose complete love of the mountains and outdoors opened a whole new world of treasured years to me."*

It is difficult to imagine how Charlotte, busy with teaching and ranching, also found time for all her work with native plants. According to *Calflora*, she *"collected extensively in the Southern Sierra Nevada and the Mojave Desert in the 1930s for Willis Linn Jepson, and throughout Kern County for several decades thereafter,"*



Photo courtesy Mona Carver

Charlotte Nash Smith



Photo courtesy Paul Gipe

Charlotte's phacelia (*Phacelia nashiana*), Short Canyon, March 2015

Charlotte Eden Nash Smith (*Continued*)

and [her] collections are noteworthy for the precise and complete ecological notes that accompanied her specimens." This is all the more impressive, given that Charlotte's eyesight failed, and she was blind in one eye by the late 1950s. Longtime neighbor **Mona Carver** remembers that Charlotte then had to use a microscope to study plants. Too busy to get together, Mona and Charlotte would leave messages in each other's mailboxes—Mona leaving an envelope containing flowers, and Charlotte replying with a detailed letter describing and identifying them.

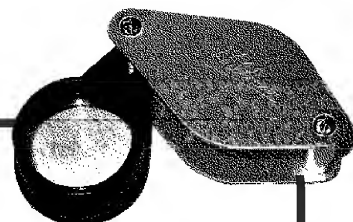
The rare and beautiful phacelia named in honor of Charlotte, *P. nashiana* (Charlotte's phacelia), is described by Twisselmann as having "stunning deep blue flowers with white throats." It is endemic to California, and known only to grow where the lower Sierra Nevada and the Tehachapi Mountains transition to the Mojave Desert — in Joshua-tree scrub or pinyon/juniper woodland, on sandy or granitic slopes. On 24 March 2015, on a Kern CNPS field trip to Short Canyon, participants sighted a colony of *P. nashiana* in and around a rock outcropping, on a south-facing slope of decomposed granite. Twisselmann states that the type specimen was collected by Charlotte Nash Smith on 5 May 1940, and quotes a personal communication from her: "In 1935, Mr. V. L. Haynes, who was road foreman, found a plant of this in Jawbone Canyon, and brought it to me at Cantil. As it was so lovely, I pressed it and kept it. (I had never heard or dreamed of such a thing as collecting, that there could be any desire by the botanists for specimens, or had I any idea how to press and dry them.) I didn't see the plant again until 1940, when I found the Nine Mile colony, the only one I ever saw on the desert," wrote Charlotte.

Twisselmann wrote, in his 1967 *A Flora of Kern County*, "In recent years, happily for both California botany and for Mrs. Smith, she has resumed collecting. In co-operation with Dr. Rimo Bacigalupi, she has furnished me lists of all her more than 1,400 collections and duplicates of many of those of special significance. She and her husband Hugh (whose family first settled in the region in 1853) have an encyclopedic knowledge of the natural and human history of the Greenhorn Range; it has been both a privilege and a joy to share in it."

And that is the story of how a little girl from Minnesota came to feel that "... the golden hills of the cattle country ... were [her] true home and love," and came to find there her true callings as rancher, teacher, and botanist. 🌸

Author's note: My sincere thanks go to Mona Carver, Charlotte's longtime neighbor, who provided me

with Charlotte's 36-page, typewritten autobiographical account, as well as personal details, newspaper clippings and photographs. I am also grateful to **Lucy Clark, Clyde Golden, Jean Piercy, and Glenda Johnson** for their assistance, and to **Paul Gipe** for his photograph of *Phacelia nashiana*.



Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS

Thursday, June 18, 2015 - 7 pm:

James André, Director of the University of California Granite Mountains Desert Research Center — "*Desert Flora, the status of floristic inventory, rate of new taxonomic discoveries and conservation amid looming impacts*"

July and August: No meetings

Thursday, September 17, 2015 - 7 pm:

Naomi Fraga, research scientist at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden — "*Flora of Owens Peak*"

Thursday, October 15, 2015 - 7 pm:

Topic — TBA

Thursday, November 19, 2015 - 7 pm:

J. Travis Columbus, research scientist at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Professor of Botany at the Claremont Graduate University — "*Grass Systematics*"

Thursday, December 17, 2015

— No meeting

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St.), Bakersfield, CA.

Meeting times:

6 pm — Plant identification

7 pm — Program presentation

President's Message Wildflower Show and 2015 Bloom Report

by Rich Spjut

THE KERN CHAPTER RECENTLY HELD ITS wildflower show at the tenth annual Garden Fest in celebration of the CNPS Native Plant Week.



Photo courtesy Dinah Campbell

Dorie Giragosian oversaw the 2015 chapter wildflower show tables at the annual Garden Fest, April 18th. Here, she and Rich Spjut greet visitors.

Our thanks to **Dorie Giragosian** who made the arrangements and spent the entire day at the center booth, and to **Ellen Cypher** and **Denis Kearns** for collecting, identifying and labeling plants they brought to the show. Dorie also helped with the printing of the labels, and collecting of the flowers in the Mojave Desert, Kern Canyon, and

Greenhorn Mountains.

Thanks also to our other

chapter members who helped in setting up and taking down the tables, posters, banners, books, and vases.



Sample wildflower specimen with labeling from 2015 wildflower show

This spring began with an early bloom in the Carrizo Plain; however, the weather quickly warmed, causing flowers to wither sooner than we might have wanted. For example, many plants we had in our 2011 show were not available. Moreover, scheduled field trips were moved forward, taking into consideration the fading flowers. Our field trip to the Carrizo Plain, led



Photo courtesy Rich Spjut

Eremalche parryi and *Juniperus californicus*

by Denis Kearns, nevertheless found a good showing of *Eremalche parryi* for which we conducted a local survey in the area. It was observed mostly around California juniper and California ephedra along the crest of a hill. By the time of the **Bioblitz** of **May 9**, conducted on the TNC Caliente ranches and the **Tejon Ranch Conservancy**, the Douglas oak woodlands had turned brown.



Photo courtesy Rich Spjut

Dry oak savannah, May 2015

In planning future wildflower shows, especially when scheduled during Native Plant Week, we should emphasize native species, as opposed to introducing non-native invasive species. We should also keep in mind that holding these events outdoors, in the open, means that flowers will wither quickly in sun-heated water in glass vases, and that wind can also be a problem. ☼

FIELD TRIPS

by Lucy Clark, Patty and Dale Gradek

KERN CNPS FIELD TRIPS ARE OPEN TO ALL. Occasionally, numbers will be limited by the land owners or agencies. We welcome you to join us to see and learn about our native plants and their habitats, to learn to identify plants, or to photograph them. If you are skilled in plant identification, you can help us all learn.

Please always dress in layers, wear boots or shoes you can hike in and bring food and water. You may also want to bring a hat, sunscreen, binoculars, camera, plant lists and useful references such as *Kern County Flora* and the *Jepson Manual*, or any book you like. We try to meet at a spot where we can park some cars and carpool to our location to save the air, gas, and money, and make sure that on a "roadside" trip that we will have adequate space to park. CNPS does not arrange carpools; each person does so at the meeting place.

All trips are by reservation only, so we know whom to expect, and how many will be attending each field trip. Each trip will have the contact person listed. Please email the contact person by two days before the field trip and indicate the names of those who will attend. Also, if you or any of your party's plans change and you decide not to attend, please email the contact person and let them know. (For the San Joaquin River Gorge Trip please email Denis Kearns by the date indicated in the description below.)

May 30th, Saturday

OLD STATE ROAD

Contact: **Lucy Clark** – lucyg391@gmail.com

RSVP Deadline: **8 pm, Thursday, June 4th**

Old State Rd. was the main route over the Greenhorn Mountains from Alta Sierra to Kernville before SH155 was built and Kernville was relocated. It descends from 6000' to 2600' and offers diverse habitat and uncommon and rare plants are found adjacent to the road. In recent years it seems to have been botanically ignored. It passes through the area burned in last year's Shirley fire, which should offer an opportunity to see fire-following plants.

The official trip will begin in Alta Sierra at the Greenhorn Grille (follow the signs to the GG) at 9:30am, and conclude in Wofford Heights in the afternoon. Old State Road is an unpaved road, well maintained by Kern County (much better than nearby USFS roads). Carpool suggestions will be provided to the people who RSVP.

June 14th, Sunday

HIGHER ELEVATION PORTIONS

of TEJON RANCH with **Mike White**

Contact: **Patty Gradek** – pattygradek@gmail.com

RSVP Deadline: **8 pm, Thursday, June 11th**

Mike White, Tejon Conservancy's Conservation Science Director, will be leading us on a field trip to the higher elevations of Tejon Ranch. Plan on this being a full-day trip. The meeting place and time will be determined later. Those who RSVP will be given the meeting place and directions and the time we will meet. Pets and smoking are not allowed on the Tejon Ranch.

You may want to bring the Tejon Ranch Plant List available on our chapter website: kern.cnps.org, as well as any other references that are appropriate. If you have a four-wheel drive or an AWD, please drive it to help fellow members. We have to inform the Conservancy of the numbers that will be attending and they will limit the field trip to 30 participants.

June 26, 27 & 28, Friday, Saturday, & Sunday

HORSE MEADOW CAMPGROUND &
SHERMAN PASS ROAD

Contact: **Lucy Clark** – lucyg391@gmail.com

RSVP Deadline: **8pm, Wednesday, June 17th**

Kern Chapter CNPS has a long, but interrupted history of taking camping trips to see the native plants of our county, and to socialize. Long before I was an active member I read about Randi's planned trips to the Sierra, or desert. About three years ago, one was planned for **Horse Meadow Campground**, south off



Photo courtesy Clyde Golden

Old State Road



of the Sherman Pass Road. This campground has been a spot enjoyed for several years on day wildflower trips, complete with foot-soaking in the creek running through it!

Three of us went on a Thursday, and enjoyed exploring the campground flora, hiking up the mountain to see what was there, ID-ing and drawing plants, and then that foot-soaking. On Saturday morning two cars arrived with others prepared for the camp-out. But first, we wanted to search the meadows along Sherman Pass! That took all day, and as the day lengthened, a huge and fierce storm brought wind and rain from the west, pelting our windshields, and all desire to camp left us! SOOO, we want to try this again!

Please put **June 26, 27, and 28** on your calendar for Horse Meadow Campground! If you have time and wish to go early and stay late in this seldom used campground, there will surely be several of us interested! The last few years there has been no water, so bringing lots of your own is mandatory!

Please email by the early date above, so we can plan any meals we will share, if we choose to do so. You will need all of your own equipment for camping, your food, and cash to pay for sharing a campsite. We will work out stoves, if necessary. Start planning now!

Anyone who wants to attend on Saturday only should also RSVP, and we will plan where and when to meet.



Questions for Readers...

Know about grey-water systems?

DON AND YVONNE TURKAL HAVE questions regarding installing a grey-water system and are hoping a reader might know the answers or where they might them.

- Do you know of a contractor who can install a grey-water system in a residence?
- Do you know what the requirements are for installing a grey-water system?
- Do you know of a source for any literature about installing such a system?

Conservation Corner

by Fred Chynoweth

GREG SUBA CNPS CONSERVATION PROGRAM Director and staff are taking the lead in getting out the message that native plants can be drought-tolerant and provide other benefits as well. This includes meetings with the Governor's staff regarding re-landscaping the Capitol, giving workshops to landscape professionals and working on legislation to encourage use of native plants.

Greg is also working with NGOs to provide information to governmental agencies for accounting of carbon and developing plans for carbon sequestration in soil. Greg and staff are working on healthy soils initiatives to promote the use of compost and the management of grasslands, and also preparing a paper promoting additional research. Greg is also assisting chapters involved in local issues.

NGOs met in April to begin planning strategy regarding off-road vehicle use in state parks for the next two years.

CNPS is giving workshops to inter-tribal council meetings.

Mona Roberson, formerly a botanist with the state parks has been hired as Treasure Hunt Coordinator and Supervisory Botanist. 🌸

Author's note: The conservation tab on the state website has quite a bit of information for those interested. This includes official policies and positions.

They have already contacted their water service provider and two plumbers in Bakersfield — without success. They saw a system referred to on a television program but it was for a Los Angeles source.

This could be valuable knowledge for all of us. If you have answers to any of these questions send them to the newsletter *mimulus.memo@gmail.com* and your e-mail will be forwarded to the Turkals and shared in the next newsletter.



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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society meets the third Thursday of each month at Hall Ambulance Community Room,
1013 21st St. (21st & N St), Bakersfield, CA. Chapter website: kern.cnps.org

The California Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of California native plants and their natural habitats, and to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons — professional and amateur — with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking and gardening. As a Kern County resident, your membership includes Eremontia, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; the Bulletin, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and The Mimulus Memo, the newsletter of the Kern Chapter.

Join CNPS or renew your membership online at www.cnps.org.

Student/Limited Income – \$25

Individual – \$45

Family or Library – \$75

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Mimulus Memo



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